

**Letter of Findings Number: 07-0097  
Sales Tax-Penalty  
For the Periods 2002-2005**

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**ISSUE**

**I. Tax Administration-Penalty**

**Authority:** IC § 6-8.1-10-2.1; [45 IAC 15-11-2](#)

Taxpayer protests the imposition of the ten percent negligence penalty.

**STATEMENT OF FACTS**

Taxpayer is a corporation located outside Indiana. Taxpayer sells merchandise to Indiana customers; however, Taxpayer did not collect or remit sales tax on those sales.

The Indiana Department of Revenue ("Department") audited Taxpayer. The Department assessed Taxpayer additional sales tax, penalty, and interest for unreported sales. Taxpayer requested abatement of the penalty.

The Department sent a letter to Taxpayer stating that Taxpayer could request a hearing by replying to the letter within twenty (20) days of the letter. Taxpayer did not reply to the Department's letter. Due to Taxpayer's failure to reply, this Letter of Findings is written based on the information in Taxpayer's protest file and other Department records relating to Taxpayer.

**I. Tax Administration-Penalty**

**DISCUSSION**

Taxpayer protests the imposition of the ten percent negligence penalty on Taxpayer's failure to remit sales tax.

Penalty waiver is permitted if the taxpayer shows that the failure to pay the full amount of the tax was due to reasonable cause and not due to willful neglect. IC § 6-8.1-10-2.1. The Indiana Administrative Code, [45 IAC 15-11-2](#) further provides:

(b) "Negligence" on behalf of a taxpayer is defined as the failure to use such reasonable care, caution, or diligence as would be expected of an ordinary reasonable taxpayer. Negligence would result from a taxpayer's carelessness, thoughtlessness, disregard or inattention to duties placed upon the taxpayer by the Indiana Code or department regulations. Ignorance of the listed tax laws, rules and/or regulations is treated as negligence. Further, failure to read and follow instructions provided by the department is treated as negligence. Negligence shall be determined on a case by case basis according to the facts and circumstances of each taxpayer.

(c) The department shall waive the negligence penalty imposed under [IC 6-8.1-10-1](#) if the taxpayer affirmatively establishes that the failure to file a return, pay the full amount of tax due, timely remit tax held in trust, or pay a deficiency was due to reasonable cause and not due to negligence. In order to establish reasonable cause, the taxpayer must demonstrate that it exercised ordinary business care and prudence in carrying out or failing to carry out a duty giving rise to the penalty imposed under this section. Factors which may be considered in determining reasonable cause include, but are not limited to:

- (1) the nature of the tax involved;
- (2) judicial precedents set by Indiana courts;
- (3) judicial precedents established in jurisdictions outside Indiana;
- (4) published department instructions, information bulletins, letters of findings, rulings, letters of advice, etc.;
- (5) previous audits or letters of findings concerning the issue and taxpayer involved in the penalty assessment.

Reasonable cause is a fact sensitive question and thus will be dealt with according to the particular facts and circumstances of each case.

Taxpayer argues that it contacted its domiciliary state's taxing authority and that state's taxing authority indicated that Taxpayer should only collect sales tax for the domiciliary state. However, Taxpayer did not contact the Department with respect to its Indiana-destination sales. Taxpayer's failure to contact the Department constitutes negligence on Taxpayer's part. Other than the issue regarding the contact with the domiciliary state's taxing authority, Taxpayer has not provided sufficient grounds in its protest to justify the Department's waiver of penalty.

**FINDING**

Taxpayer's protest is denied.

*Posted: 08/22/2007 by Legislative Services Agency*  
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